

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 /066 W

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R 041111Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3389

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

ERUTAAK/AMEMBASSY CONAKRY 794

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 788

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: UR, ML, PINR

SUBJ: SOVIET-AMERICAN DETENTE IN BAMAKO.

1. BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1975 (WHEN THE DIPLOMATIC COLONY RETURNED TO BAMAKO AFTER THE SUMMER EXODUS) AND MARCH OF 1976, THE EMBASSY HAS HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL. IN SEPT. NEW DCM CALLED ON HIS SOVIET COUNTERPART, MINISTER COUSELOR VIKTOR BARAKHNINE WHO HAD BEEN CHARGE SINCE ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AMBASSADOR YOURI

ZOLOTOV PREVIOUS MONTH WHILE ON VACATION IN TUNIS.

THIS CALL LASTED ONE HOUR

AND SET THE PATTERN FOR FUTURE CALLS, FOULTO

DATE, WITH TEA, ARMENIAN BRANDY AND MUCH GOOD-

NATURED KIDDING. BARAKHNINE RETURNED THE FIRST CALL.

TOPICS INCLUDED LIFE IN BAMAKO,

DETENTE, LOCAL EVENTS, ETC. BARAKHNINE MADE DIS-

PARAGING REMARKS ABOUT AFRICANSOIAD THE MUSLIM RELIGION.

POLITICAL TOPICS DIDNOT APPEAR TO INTEREST BARAKHNINE

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UNTIL RECENTLY.SIMILAR TALKS INVOLVING AMBASSADOR

AND DCM TOOK PLACE AT DINNER PARTIES, DIPLOMATIC RECEPTIONS AND OTHER OCCASIONS INVOLVING THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. BARAKHNINE HAS A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR AND SPEAKS ABOUT S-3 LEVEL FRENCH.

3. OTHER CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO EMBASSIES WERE GENERALLY RESTRICTED TO MEETINGS OF THE YOUNG DIPLOMATS CLUB, WHICH INCLUDES ALL DIPLOMATS IN BAMAKO EXCEPT AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES, POLITICAL OFFICER DID CALL, HOWEVER, SOON AFTER HIS ARRIVAL AT POST ON SECOND SECRETARY YOURI TCHAPOURNINE. THIS CALL WAS NOT RETURNED, BUT THEY RARELY ARE IN BAMAKO. SOVIETS WHO ATTEND YOUNG DIPLOMATS FUNCTIONS ARE SAME QUARTET OF DIPLOMATS AND THEIR WIVES; STANISLA SMIRNOV, FIRST SECRETARY; EVGUENI BOGOUTCHARSKY, FIRST SECRETARY; YOURI TCHAPOURNINE, SECOND SECRETARY; AND VALENTIN KOMAROV, THIRD SECRETARY. SMIRNOV AND TCHAPOURINE, AT LEAST, ARE KGB.) GOOD RAPPORT BETWEEN SOVIETS AND AMERICANS HAS DEVELOPED, WITH THE SOVIETS SEEMINGLY UNINTERESTED IN POLITICAL ISSUES.

3. IN EARLY FEB. DCM CALLED ON BARAKHNINE, INVITED HIM AND HIS WIFE TO A FILM SHOWING FEBRUARY 20 AT DCM'S RESIDENCE, AND LEFT HIM 12 BLANK INVITATIONS FOR HIS COLLEAGUES. BARAKHNINE WAS SURPRISED BUT ACCEPTED. SOVIETS MADE ONE INDIRECT ATTEMPT TO FIND OUT WHAT DCM WAS UP TO AND THEN TURNED UP EN MASSE. COUNSELOR VASSILI BORDIOUJA, THE EMBASSY'S SENIOR PARTY OFFICIAL, WHO IS RARELY SEEN ON THE DIPLOMATIC CIRCUIT ARRIVED AS DID THE ABOVE MENTIONED QUARTET. OTHERS INCLUDED DIMITRI EGOROV, FIRST SECRETARY; VALERIE VOLIANSKY, SECOND SECRETARY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS; INTERPRETER MIKHAIL SMYSLOV, AND TRADE MISSION CHIEF OLEG MOJARSKY. THE EVENING WAS A GREAT SUCCESS. IT WAS PROBABLY THE BEST MOVIE ANY OF THE SOVIETS HAS EVER SEEN AND THEY THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THEMSELVES.

4. ON FEB. 23, AMBASSADOR AND DCM ATTENDED SOVIET ARMY DAY RECEPTION. ALL WHO HAD ATTENDED FILM SHOWING FEW DAYS EARLIER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND CLEARLY MADE A FUSS OVER US. BARAKHNINE SAID HE WANTED TO INVITE AMERICANS
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OVER FOR A FILM SHOWING, BUT ADDED JOKINGLY THAT ALL THEIR FILMS WERE ANTI-AMERICAN. CULTURAL ATTACHE VOLINASKY DID TELL US LATER, HOWEVER, THAT BARAKHNINE HAD CHARGED HIM WITH COMING UP WITH A GOOD FILM FOR THE AMERICANS.

5. DCM'S TALK FEB. 26 WITH BARAKHNINE WAS REPORTED SEPTTEL (BAMAKO 753). THIS WAS FIRST TIME DISCUSSION WAS FRANKLY POLITICAL AND WHERE U.S. AND SOVIET POSITIONS

WERE EXPOUNDED AND DEFENDED. THIS WAS DONE IN FRONT OF SEVERAL AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES. BARAKHNINE'S SENSE OF HUMOR LEAVES HIM WHEN HE STARTS EXTOLLING THE MERITS OF "SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM". THIS LEADS INTO HIS DENYING THE SOCIALISM OF DENMARK, SWEDEN, ETC. AND, INSISTING THT ONLY THE SOVIET BRAND IS CORRECT. DCM ASKED IF COMMUNISM ANSWERED EVERYTHING AND LEFT NO ROOM FOR RELIGION. BARAKHNINE FROM THEN ON WAS AT HIS WORST. HE CLEARLY DISLIKES ANY AND ALL RELIGIONS. HIS AUDIENCE INCLUDED SEVERAL MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES, BUT BARAKHNINE CONTINUED.

6. CONCLUSION: DURING PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS, THIS EMBASSY'S CONTACTS WITH SOVIET EMBASSY HAVE EXPANDED AND DEEPENED. SEVERAL OF THE SOVIETS NOW SPEAK TO US FRANKLY ABOUT THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR CHILDREN IN RUSSIA, LIVING PROBLEMS HERE, AND EVEN THE RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON THEIR ACTIVITIES IN MALI. THERE ARE OCCASIONAL CHANCE ENCOUNTERS DOWNTOWN, BUT NO REPEATS. THE DCM HAS FOUND TWO SOVIETS (VALENTIN KOMAROV AND MIKHAIL SMYSLOV) WHO CLAIM PRIOR RIDING EXPERIENCE AND WILL BE FOLLOWING UP WITH INVITATIONS FOR A DRINK AND A RIDE AT THE LOCAL CLUB HIPPIQUE. DCM ALSO PLANS ANOTHER FILM EVENING AT HIS RESIDENCE IN MARCH OR APRIL. WE EXPECT TO SEE MORE OF THE SOVIETS IN THE MONTHS AHEAD ALTHOUGH A NEW AMBASSADOR IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE AND HE MAY HAVE HIS OWN VIEWS ON THIS.

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